

ABSTRACT

There is provided a HBV precore protein having an ability of forming particles, and a means for determining  
5 it. A novel HBV precore protein that forms the virus (like) particles of HBV was identified. The present invention provides this novel HBV precore protein. Furthermore, there are provided core-like particles and virus-like particles formed by this HBV precore protein.  
10 These virus-like particles can be used for vaccines and therapeutic agents. The present invention also provides a method of determining the HBV precore protein and a method of determining the anti-HBV precore protein antibody.